Review Article

*Beyond the Post-Modern Mind**

Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi'

What can an accomplished Western theologian and philosopher offer to modern Islamic thought? Is there a need for the contemporary Muslim intelligentsia to learn from outside sources? And, if "a conscious and intellectual defence must be made of the Islamic tradition,"[1] does it mean that Muslims have to live in a state of mental inertia vis-à-vis the impressive Western tradition

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*Huston Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*. Updated and Revised Edition. New York: Crossroads, 1989.

[1]S. H. Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man* (London, 1975), p. 148. Nasr's full statement on the matter reads as follows: "To conclude, it must be asserted categorically once again that to preserve Islam and Islamic civilization, a conscious and intellectual defence must be made of the Islamic tradition. Moreover, a thorough intellectual criticism must be made of the modern world and its shortcomings. Muslims cannot hope to follow the same path as the West without reaching the same impasse or an even worse one, because of the rapidity of the tempo of change today. The Muslim intelligentsia must face all the changes mentioned here, and many others, with confidence in themselves. They must cease to live in the state of a psychological and cultural sense of inferiority." Ibid. These broad statements of Nasr on the necessity of presenting Islam as a viable intellectual system form the basis of the Islamization of Knowledge Project that was initiated by the late Isma'il al Fārūqī. Ziauddin Sardar summarizes the main drive behind this Project as follows: "The task before Muslim intelligentsia, then, is to develop, using the epistemology of Islam, alternative paradigms of knowledge for both natural and social sciences and to conceive and mold disciplines most relevant to the needs of contemporary Muslim societies. Only when distinctive Islamic paradigms and associated bodies of knowledge have evolved can Muslim scholars contemplate achieving synthesis on an appropriate footing with knowledge created by Western civilization." Ziauddin Sardar, *Islamic Features: The Shape of Ideas to Come* (London: Mansell, 1985), p. 104. Sardar, following in the footsteps of Nasr and al Fārūqī, contends that a genuine Islamic theory of knowledge rests on two premises: 1) Concepts, epistemes, and paradigms should receive their "ideational" thrust from the main sources of Islam—namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah. 2) A contemporary Islamic theory of knowledge is unimaginable outside of the context of "cultural colonialism." This is best expressed by Sardar who maintains that: "The epistemology of Western civilization has now become a dominant mode of thought and inquiry to the exclusion of other, alternative ways of knowing. Hence, the totality of Muslim societies, indeed the planet as a whole, is being shaped in the image of Western man. This epistemological imperialism has deep roots going back over 300 years. Its origins lie in the beginnings of the European colonial adventure and the emergence of scientific rationality as the only legitimate method for understanding and controlling nature." Ibid., p. 86.

in philosophy, theology, and other humanistic and social sciences? Finally, what are the intellectual dangers of borrowing from a Western heritage which is diffuse in nature, and which is not free from ideology most of the time? Would we be accused of eclecticism and a lack of historicism?[2]

Undoubtedly, a major North African philosopher like Abdallah Laroui[3] would dismiss the whole theological project of Islam and Christianity, or even the whole theoretical enterprise of comparative religion, as irrelevant, ahistorical, anti-intellectual, reductionist, and obstructionist. The same attitude is shared by not a small number of Arab and Muslim social scientists who consider metaphysics a fading religious pastime that should have been driven away from the human mental endeavor long before Kant appeared on the scene. This orientation is sociologically developed by Bassam Tibi in his recent book entitled *The Crisis of Modern Islam: A Preindustrial Culture in the Scientific-Technological Age*, where he argues that the only viable approach to Islam in the modern world is the sociological method. Therefore, his aim is not to study the spiritual, philosophical, and social manifestations of Islam in today's world, but to understand it, "as it is incorporated into reality as a *fait social*—that is, a social fact."[4]

Metaphysics and the Search for a Method in Religious Studies

Professor Huston Smith, who sees the validity of the argument that religion is a social fact, argues that the religious question is primarily metaphysical. Thus he offers a "synthetic construct" of religion: metaphysical and social. Put differently, Smith maintains that, transcendentally speaking, religion is a priori and universal; whereas socially speaking, religion is subject to diversity and particularism. It is when we understand his "synthetic argument" that we begin to unravel his conceptual concerns: Smith is troubled by the modern philosophical assertion that truth is made and not found.[5]

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[2]In his controversial philosophical analysis of the predicament of the Arab intelligentsia, Abdallah Laroui argues that, "Arab intellectuals think according to two rationales. Most of them profess the traditionalist rationale (salafi); the rest profess an eclecticism. Together, these tendencies succeed in abolishing the historical dimension. But if the intellectual erases history from his thought, can he erase it from reality? Of course not; history as past and present structure informs the present condition of the Arabs quite as much as it does that of their adversaries." A. Laroui, *The Crisis of the Arab Intelligentsia: Traditionalism or Historicism?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 153-54.

[3]A. Laroui, *L'ideologie arabe contemporaine* (Paris, 1967).

[4]B. Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam: A Preindustrial Culture in the Scientific-Technological Age* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah press, 1988), p. xii.

[5]This notion is examined below.

What is, therefore, the real intention of the author behind writing such a book?[6] And what direction does he follow in justifying his goal? To start with, Smith's main goal is to show that though the Renaissance dealt a major blow to the religious quest, "religion" is still a philosophical issue. In that sense, the author's interpretation and criticism rest on the philosophical and theological tradition in which he places his arguments, so to elucidate the author's concepts, one must understand his intellectual framework. Smith is aware of the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the Enlightenment Project and its main architects, be they dead or alive. Smith considers contemporary analytical philosophy in Europe, as well as in the United States, heir to the Enlightenment Project. In addition to his awareness of the substantial "ideational" threat to theology from analytical philosophy, he is also concerned about the relevance of the religious factor to our social life. His discussion of religious malaise in society is premised on the rupture between religion and society in the secular world.

Smith discusses a significant motif in the modern Christian intellectual tradition: the compatibility of the scientific view of human nature with the Christian (religious) one. In that, he follows in the footsteps of Reinhold Niebuhr, who was ambivalent about the progress motif in Western societies. Niebuhr wrote that, "a further consequence of modern optimism is a philosophy of history expressed in the idea of progress. Either by a force immanent in

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[6]This is a hermeneutical question which is developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer for the Christian tradition, and by Fazlur Rahman for the Islamic tradition. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Second, revised edition (New York: Crossroads, 1989), especially part II, and F. Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Gadamer maintains that hermeneutics is necessary because "the literal meaning of Scripture . . . . is not univocally intelligible in every place and at every moment." Ibid., p. 175. But hermeneutics went through a number of structural transformations, especially in the modern period. In this regard, Gadamer notes that, "Hermeneutics had to rid itself one day of all its dogmatic limitations and become free to be itself, so that it could rise to the significance of a universal historical organon." Ibid., p. 176. Rahman, on the other hand, maintains correctly that the sources of "Islamic intellectualism," namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah, have to be reinterpreted in light of modern conditions. The hermeneutical method defended by Rahman proposes a process of interpretation which "consists of a double movement, from the present situation to Qur'anic times, then back to the present. The Qur'an is the divine response, through the Prophet's mind, to the moral-social situation of the Prophet's Arabia, particularly to the problems of commercial Meccan society of his day." Ibid., p. 5. Therefore, Rahman suggests a historical method of interpretation that takes the complex structure of the Qur'an, as well as the historical evolution of Islam, into consideration. For a discussion of Gadamer's hermeneutics see R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), especially chapter VII [pp. 315-66] where Rorty argues that truth is made and not found, and that hermeneutics is no longer interested in finding truth as much as it is interested in understanding the human sciences, i.e., philosophy, literary criticism, and religion.

nature itself, or by the gradual extension of rationality, or by the elimination of specific sources of evil, such as priesthoods, tyrannical government and class divisions in society, modern man expects to move toward some kind of perfect society. The idea of progress is composed of many elements. It is particularly important to consider one element of which modern culture is itself completely oblivious."[7]

As Smith argues throughout the book, the philosophers of the Renaissance believed firmly in the full possibilities of science. In a sense, they were optimistic about the present and future of mankind. They believed that science will solve man's eternal problems. Progress was the catchword of the 19th century as it was completely associated with industry, democracy and expansion. In other words, the mentality of the philosophers of science viewed the traditional biblical episteme as a hindrance to the potentialities of the human mind. To their mind, the Christian revelation was interpreted in a stagnant and debilitating manner, and it was time to break away from this

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[7]R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man. Volume I* (New York: Scribner's, 1964), p. 24. Niebuhr contends along the same lines of the main 18th and 19th century thinkers that progress is the main feature of the Renaissance. To better understand the historical context in which he places his argument, the following thoughts of Niebuhr are quoted: "The Renaissance as a spiritual movement is best understood as a tremendous affirmation of the limitless possibilities of human existence, and as a rediscovery of the sense of a meaningful history. This affirmation takes many forms, not all of which are equally consistent with the fundamental impulse of the movement. But there is enough consistency in the movement as a whole to justify the historian in placing in one historical category such diverse philosophical, religious and social movements as the early Italian Renaissance, Cartesian rationalism and the French enlightenment; as the liberal idea of progress and Marxist catastrophism; as sectarian perfectionism and secular utopianism. In all of these multifarious expressions there is a unifying principle. It is the impulse towards the fulfillment of life in history. The idea that life can be fulfilled without those reservations and qualifications which Biblical and Reformation thought make is derived from two different sources; from the classical confidence in human capacities and from the Biblical-Christian impulse towards sanctification and the fulfillment of life, more particularly the Biblical-eschatological hope of the fulfillment of history itself." R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man, Volume II*, p. 160.

On the notion of progress, see the following important works: J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (London, 1924); A. Comte, *Course de philosophie positive* (Paris, 1835-1852); M. Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique de progrès des l'esprit humain* (Paris, 1933); H. Spencer, *Illustrations of Universal Progress* (New York, 1881) F. Teggart, *The Idea of Progress* (Berkeley, 1949); A. J. Todd, *Theories of Social Progress* (New York, 1919). In his Introduction to the classical book on progress, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* [pp. 2-3], Condorcet says that "Ces observations, sur ce que l'homme a été, sur ce qu'il est aujourd'hui, conduiront ensuite aux moyens d'assurer et d'assurer et d'accelerer les nouveaux progrès que sa nature lui permet d'espérer encore. Tel est le but de l'ouvrage que j'ai entrepris, et dont le résultat sera de montrer, par le raisonnement et par les faits, que la nature n'a marque aucun terme au perfectionnement des facultés humaines; que la perfectibilité, désormais indépendants de toute puissance qui voudrait les arrester, nont d'autre terme que la durée du globe ou la nature nous a jetés."

view to a much more mature one that was capable at emancipating the human mind from the shackles of external and past-oriented revelation.

Far from considering revelation a source of spiritual and historical rigidity and stagnation, Smith argues that the Transcendent is the only certain foundation on which man can build his future. In that sense, he agrees with Niebuhr that religion "interprets history from the standpoint of the eternal (i.e., since it sees the source and end of history beyond history), it gives the individual a place to stand within a world of meaning, even when and if the particular historical movement into which he is integrated should fail completely."[8]

Smith highlights what he calls "The Revolution in Western Thought" (pp. 3-16) in the first chapter of the book. He says that a deep-seated epistemological transformation has taken place in the Western world: "Quietly, irrevocably, something enormous has happened to Western man. His outlook on life and the world has changed so radically that in the perspective of history the twentieth century is likely to rank—with the fourth century, which witnessed the triumph of Christianity, and the seventeenth, which signaled the dawn of modern science—as one of the very few that have instigated genuinely new epochs in human thought. In this change, which is still in process, we of the current generation are playing a crucial but as yet not widely recognized part."[9] To put it simply, traditional metaphysics gave way to a new aggressive epistemology which is based on science and the deepening role of the human mind in the affairs of the universe. Smith says that, "no one who works in philosophy today can fail to realize that the sense of the cosmos has been shaken by an encyclopedic skepticism. The clearest evidence of this is the collapse of what historically has been philosophy's central discipline: objective metaphysics."[10] The scholastic argument about the revelation/reason polarity, which was an integral part of the intellectual environment of the medieval period and the early Renaissance, is no longer a significant issue today.[11] Human reason has occupied the center of all intellectual endeavor.

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[8]R. Niebuhr, ibid., p. 69.

[9]H. Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*; Ibid., p. 3.

[10]Ibid., p. 10.

[11]To better understand this issue from an Islamic perspective, consult the following: 1) Louis Gardet and M. M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane* (Paris, 1948). 2) Ernest Renan, *Averroes et l'Averrroisme* (3rd ed., Paris, 1866). 3) Leon Gauthier, *La théorie d'Ibn Rochd (Averroes) sur les rapports de la religion et de la philosophie* (Paris, 1909). 4) Leon Gauthier, "Scolastique musulmane et scolastique chrétienne," *Revue d'Histoire de la Philosophie*, II (1928). 5) A. J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam* (New York, 1957). The same issue has been raised in both Judaism and Hinduism as well: A. Heschel, *God in Search of Man* (New York, 1965), and K. S. Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta* (London, 1961).

The continuing rupture between revelation and reason since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution has produced a thoroughly secularized world. In this connection, an analytical distinction should be drawn between the West and Christianity. The modern West is the product of the process of secularization, whereas the chief assumptions of medieval Christianity are based on the following premises: "Reality is focused in a person, . . . the mechanics of the physical world exceed our comprehension, and . . . the way to our salvation lies not in conquering nature but in following the commandments which God has revealed to us."[12] Secularization has perpetuated an environment of alienation between man and God.

Smith maintains that a sense of fragmentation pervades the basic attitudes of Western man toward life and society: "I have argued that the distinctive feature of the contemporary mind as evidenced by frontier thinking in science, philosophy, theology and the arts is its acceptance of reality as unordered in any objective way that man's mind can discern."[13] Smith's response to the prevalent sense of epistemological and social fragmentation in the West is to call for the recovery of its historical and epistemological continuity with its past. The salient features of tradition are stability, focus, foundation, intention, and purpose. Therefore, Smith's intention is not to search for new foundations of knowledge as much as to reestablish the merits and relevance of the old ones. Thus his criticism of the post-modern mind involves a reaffirmation of a traditional language. He encourages us to look in the reservoir of our accumulated knowledge to find a viable solution to the predicament of modern man. As a consequence, he welcomes all human disciplines from epistemology to deconstruction and hermeneutics if they help us in excavating the deep layers of traditional meaning. He replaces the epistemic rupture, often discussed by Foucault, with a harmonious language and intention. In a sense, Smith is after finding a deep structure for our philosophical investigation.

Smith's Concept of the Transcendent and Its Relevance to Modern Islamic Thought

Modern Islamic thought has preserved its internal integrity by stressing the importance of the transcendent in the secular environment. Two major modern Muslim thinkers come to mind: Jamal al-Din Afghani and Muhammad 'Abduh. Their premises support the historical continuity and the modern

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[12]Smith, ibid., p. 5.
[13]Ibid., p. 16.

relevance of the traditional "transcendental" discourse and method. They stress "the Islamic model," which draws its theoretical orientation from both the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and which is inspired by the historical experience of the Prophet (SAAS) and his companions.

In addition, the questions that Afghani and 'Abduh raised revolve mainly around doctrinal issues. From their side, the traditional Muslim intelligentsia contends that the doctrinal discourse concerns the purification of the fundamentals of religion. As Henri Laoust puts it: No doctrinal reform is possible without return to an original source. Therefore, the return to the just form of religion, and the affirmation of transcendent truth in a modern setting are the main preoccupations of modern Islamic thought.

The traditionalist language and method presuppose either a return to or a rejuvenation of past theological, philosophical, and cultural patterns. In that philosophical context, the Salafiyah movement was born. This movement sought to give birth to Islam in the modern world by re-embodying the early experience of Islam in the present. The concept of "history"–a concept that has an immense and subtle philosophical meaning–is in fact peripheral to modern Salafiyah. As a result, the two basic declared positions of the Salafiyah–the return to an original and unadulterated Islam, and the opening of "the gate of reasoning"–are subject to many problems. Many representatives of the modern Salafiyah have approached religious problems outside of a new world context–a context in which industrialization, with its accessory problems, have strongly shaped the rise of new ideas and of socio-economic and political relations.

Contemporary Muslim intellectuals, therefore, find themselves face to face with a set of social and historical questions that await a theological answer. Muslim intellectuals remain faithful to their vision of past Muslim history– a vision based on the significant role relevation plays in the process of history. Muslim intellectuals, while reflecting on the traditional Islamic model, cannot seek refuge in isolation; they are required by revelation to participate in the making of present history. Consequently, it should be the task of Muslims, especially the educated ones, to be thoroughly acquainted with both their traditional sources of theology, philosophy, and history, and with the challenges of the modern world. In other words, Muslims have to transcend their sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the West, if there is any, by developing a new discourse that demonstrates complete comprehension of its history, culture, philosophy, and impact on the rest of the world. From this angle, Smith's book and method occupy a unique position since they orient us toward the epistemological mechanisms of the West and how they affect the religious phenomenon.

Smith and the Enlightenment Project

One has to discuss the validity of Smith's argument in view of the philosophical project of the Enlightenment. The main goal of this project was to introduce a critical rational spirit into what were considered to be dull philosophical arguments of the medieval period. Smith is of the view that the premises of the Enlightenment are dead, but their consequences still survive with us today.[14] Two issues are relevant here: nihilism and progress. Smith argues that man need no longer be bound by a nihilistic attitude towards life because the death-of-God formula represents the spirit of a defunct era—the 19th century. The idea of progress, which was also the obsession of 19th century thinkers, has been weakened in the wake of the colossal consequences

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[14]J. Habermas comments on the rise of modernity in the West in the following manner: "Hegel was the first philosopher to develop a clear concept of modernity. We have to go back to him if we want to understand the internal relationship between modernity and rationality, which, until Max Weber, remained self-evident and which today is being called into question. We have to get clear on the Hegelian concept of modernity to be able to judge whether the claim of those who base their analyses on other premise is legitimate." J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), p. 4.

There is no doubt that Hegel [1770-1831] was a highly influential "idealistic" philosopher, and that his philosophy provided moral and intellectual legitimacy to German fascism, especially in this century. Hegel's systematic treatment of "objective universal reason" in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, and his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* reinforced the modern fascist notion that the *führer* was simply fulfilling the objectives of "universal reason," and that the individual members of society had to succumb to this reality. Hegel's political philosophy justified the Prussian state at the time as the only viable moral force in society. K. Popper has severely criticized the fascist elements in Hegelian philosophy: "Hegel rediscovered the Platonic ideas which lie behind the perennial revolt against freedom and reason. Hegelianism is the renaissance of tribalism. The historical significance of Hegel may be seen in the fact that he represents the 'missing link,' as it were, between Plato and the modern form of totalitarianism. Most of the modern totalitarians are quite unaware that their ideas can be traced back to Plato. But many know of their indebtedness to Hegel, and all of them have been brought up in the close atmosphere of Hegelianism. They have been taught to worship the state, history, and the nation." Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies: Volume 2* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 30-31. One proper connection could be made here between the views of Huston Smith, Jurgen Habermas, and Karl Popper. They all share the notion that modernity is still a dominant force in today's societies and that its roots are mainly philosophical, and that Hegel has been the single most influential philosopher in the modern period. Therefore, if the goal is to transcend modernity and postmodernity, one has also to transcend the moral and intellectual underpinnings of these two phenomena. For work on the social and political philosophy of Hegel, consult the following: M. B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (Oxford, 1935); E. Weil, *Hegel et l'état* (Paris, 1950); A. Peperzak, *Le Jeune Hegel et la vision morale du monde* (The Hague, 1960). On Hegel's phenomenology, see the following important book: J. Hyppolite, *Geneses et structure de la Phenomenologie de l'Esprit de Hegel* (Paris, 1946).

of two world wars. The question is how to examine the premises and orientations of nihilism and progress in a world that is in need of a reformulation of its thought structure.

Metaphysics and Historicism

What is historicism? And is it relevant to our philosophical debates? It is possible to argue that historicism is a critical and theoretical formulation, or a historical method which treats concepts, standards, and presuppositions in their historical context. For that purpose, historicism pursues "a complex reconstruction of the various intellectual expressions. Philosophical reflection, for the historicists, is no exception to these historical limitations. Consistently, historicism treats its own interests as bounded by interests, assumptions, and context."[15] In this sense, concepts and ideas cannot float in a vacuum; they must be discussed in a historical context.

Does Smith object to the above-mentioned formulation of historicism? He recognizes historical and social influences on religion. But, like Karl Popper, he would like to transcend the social and historical domain and investigate the metaphysical sources of knowledge. In that sense, his understanding of historicism is similar to the one presented by Popper: "I mean by 'historicism' an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principal aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the 'rhythms' or the 'patterns,' the 'laws' or the 'trends' that underlie the evolution of history."[16] There is no doubt that what Popper is attacking here is the epistemological foundation of Marxist historiography which, to his mind, makes false predictions about the future. My main concern, methodologically speaking, is to show that the sciences of metaphysics and history interwined could perpetuate an ontological theoretical position which might help reintegrate man into both revelation and society at once.[17] A refutation of historicism as a social and historical

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[15]R. D'Amico, *Historicism and Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. xi.

[16]K. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (New York: Harper, 1957), p. 3.

[17]The following are major sources on historicism: D. Collins, *Renaissance Historicism: Selections from English Literary Renaissance* (Amherst: Univ. of MA Press, 1987); F. Engel-Janosi, "The Growth of German Historicism," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science*, Series 62 (1944); E. Fackenheim, *Metaphysics and Historicity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1961; G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1968); F. Hayek, "Scientism and the Study of Society: The Historicism of the Scientistic Approach," in *The Counter-Revolution of Science* (1951); I. Johansson, *A Critique of Karl Popper's Methodology* (Oslo: Akameiforlaget, 1975); I. Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes; Philosophical Papers*, Vol. I. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978); D. Lee and R. Beck, "The Meaning of "Historicism,"

method could simply mean a refutation of realism in religion and society, which I consider not to be the position of Huston Smith.

Academia, Westernization, and the Third World

Chapter five, entitled "Flakes of Fire, Handful of Light: The Humanities as Uncontrolled Experiment" (pp. 114-32), is perhaps his most challenging section of the book. Smith proposes that the crisis of the humanities as an academic and intellectual phenomenon is pervasive, and the critical predilections of the Western mind have produced widespread dissatisfaction and alienation. Smith defines the humanities as the custodians of the human image, an image which, from a monotheistic point of view, is created in the fashion of God. The humanities carry two burdens: social and conceptual. Their social goal should be to facilitate the social interaction between man and man and man and God. Instead, advanced industrial societies are marked by a spiritual malaise which is the main cause of today's alienation. Alienation could be simply defined as the loss of vitality in man. Niebuhr, for instance, defines vitality as the ability of man to transcend his limiting physical and cultural environment by achieving a measure of unity with the divine. Alienation as the loss of vitality can be both internal and external. Internally, it manifests itself as a rupture—a split between man's mind and spirit. Externally, it is part and parcel of the loneliness and estrangement that characterizes the overpopulated modern world.

The conceptual aim of the humanities should be to introduce the student to a holistic, humanistic view of life. The academic division of labor, however, has made this task in recent years difficult. What Smith is tackling behind all of this is the impact of modernization on the Western mind. He certainly believes that this impact has been deep and negative. However, what he neglects to discuss meaningfully is the impact of Western modernization on the primordial traditions of the Third World.

Any cursory reading of the historical consequences of Europe's industrialization since the 16th century could reveal two facts: first, the triumph

American Historical Review, V. 59 (1953-54), 568-77; M. Mandelbaum, *The Problem of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 1938); H. Marcuse, "Karl Popper and the Problem of Historical Laws," in his *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 191-208; H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987); K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies. 2 Volumes.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); K. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*; P. Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975); D. Roberts, *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); R. D'amico, *Historicism and Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

of the scientific mentality of the Renaissance, and second, the rupture this triumph produced between tradition and modernity. One could argue that the impact of Western modernization on Third World religions and cultures has been destructive mainly because of the political stagnation of many Third World societies in the period preceding Western penetration. At the conceptual level, there is a pervasive dichotomy between traditional concepts and newly-imported concepts. Furthermore, this dichotomy has given rise to a widespread social rupture. Take, for example, the nature and the function of the intelligentsia in the Muslim world. Some take the Islamic revelation and the Muslim intellectual achievement throughout the ages as their point of reference; others neglect that total tradition and claim that the intellectual achievements of Muslims in the past are incompatible with the demands and conditions of the present.

The solution that Smith gives to the "conceptual chaos" of today's world is ontological-epistemological. A thinker should be able to erect the conceptual foundations of a discipline epistemologically, and should, at the same time, share in the creative process ontologically. Detached/engaged duality should characterize the modern builders of systems of thought. The following quotation from Tillich could succinctly summarize Smith's methodology: "epistemology, the knowledge of knowing, is a part of ontology, the knowledge of being, for knowing is an event within the totality of events. Every epistemological assertion is implicitly ontological. Therefore, it is more adequate to begin an analysis of existence with the question of being rather than with the problem of knowledge."[18] Smith argues implicitly that the problem of the West is its

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[18]P. Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 71. Paul Tillich (1883-1965) is an eminent theologian of this century. Though his writing was mainly intended for a Western Christian audience, the educated Muslim cannot afford to miss two significant features about Tillich's inquiry into theological and philosophical questions: method and information. Tillich's method, which is distinguished by a superb clarity of style and analytical ingenuity, sums up the achievements of one of the greatest minds of our century. Description, interpretation, and systemization of knowledge, as well as the addition of historical and philosophical insights weave his methodological approach into a passionate and rich synthesis of arguments and concepts. It is no exaggeration to state that the intellectual vitality a reader might derive from reading Tillich's various works could generate essential ideas about the different disciplines of human knowledge — philosophy, theology, history, anthropology, and sociology. The following are important sources on Tillich's theology and philosophy: J. L. Adams, *Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956); D. M. Brown, *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue* (New York: Harper and Row, 1950). M. Eliade, "Paul Tillich and the History of Religions," *The Future of Religions*, Paul Tillich (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 31-36; I. Fagre, "Revelation and the Thought of Paul Tillich: A Study of Tillich's Concept of Revelation in Volume I of his Systematic Theology," *Theological Journal of Japan Lutheran Theological College*, No. 2 (1967), pp. 44-70; R. E. Fitch, "The Social Philosophy of Paul Tillich," *Religion in Life*, Vol. 27 (Spring 1958), pp. 247-56; J. Gill, "Paul Tillich's Religious Epistemology,"

divorce of epistemology from ontology, and that the proper reconstruction
of the essential connection between being and knowledge entails a holistic
approach that begins with the question of transcendence. Smith, however,
fails to work out a thorough reconstruction of theology as an a priori foundation
of the human and social sciences. In other words, he keeps refering to
transcendence as the root of human knowledge without paying sufficient
attention to revelation, which is the cornerstone of the three monotheistic
religions.

Philosophy and the Role of the Theologian

As an engaged philosopher, H. Smith is disturbed by what he calls the
crisis in Western philosophy (chapter 6). He says that the practitioners of
philosophy in the West seem to have lost their ultimate point of reference.
Philosophical systems appear, and others collapse. What accounts for the
mess in Western philosophy? Smith identifies the situation as follows:
"Philosophy . . . seems to be a singular mess, one evidence being the number
of influential philosophers who see no future for the discipline, or at most
a minimal one."[19]

Philosophers do not play the same leading role in modern culture as
in the past, especially when philosophy and theology were allies. Smith states
correctly that "philosophers were the ones who were qualified to monitor
the conceptual foundations of culture's components, validating where
appropriate, debunking where not."[20] He calls for the reintegration of
philosophical assumptions in a holistic system of knowledge that includes
the social sciences, as well as the humanities.

Smith is, however, not quite explicit about the future relationship between

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Religious Studies, Vol. 3 (April, 1968), pp. 477-98; D. H. Kelsey, *The Fabric of Paul Tillich's
Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); W. Leibrecht, ed., *Religion and Culture:
Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959); B. Martin, "Paul Tillich
and Judaism," *Judaism*, Vol. 15 (Spring 1966), pp. 180-88; A. J. McKelway, *The Systematic
Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: Dell, 1964); H. Meynell, "Tillich's Theological Method,"
The New Theology and Modern Theologians (London: H. Meynell, 1967), pp. 137-56; R.
S. Misra, "The Concept of Reason in the Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich," *Religion and
Society* (Bangalore/India), vol. 13, no. 2, (1966), pp. 15-33; R. P. Scharlemann, "Scope of
Systematics: An Analysis of Tillich's Two Systems," *Journal of Religion*, Vol. 48 (April 1968),
pp. 136-49; H. Veatch, "Tillich's Distinction Between Metaphysics and Theology," *Review of
Metaphysics*, vol. 10(3), March 1957, pp. 529-33; and D. Weisser, ed., *Paul Tillich in Catholic
Thought* (New York: Doubleday, 1969).

[19]Smith, ibid., p. 133.
[20]Ibid., p. 138.

philosophy and theology. Tillich, for instance, in discussing the connection between philosophy and theology, inquires about the nature of both. He says that "philosophy and theology ask the question of being. But they ask it from different perspectives. Philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us."[21]

Smith is at his best as a theologian. Not only is he aware of theological and philosophical trends; he is also conscious of the value of social science contributions to religion. In this sense, he shares the concerns of many anthropologists and sociologists of religion such as C. Geertz,[22] E. Gellner,[23] B. Wilson,[24] P. Berger,[25] and their teachers E. Durkheim[26] and M. Weber.[27] Two main assumptions about the religious phenomenon characterize the work of these people, including Smith's: First, instead of diminishing in importance as a result of the encroachment of science and technology, religion has become highly differentiated and functional. Second, religion is responsible for the ultimate meaning in human life. For instance, in his celebrated essay on "Religion as a Cultural System," Clifford Geertz defines religion in the following

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[21]P. Tillich, ibid., p. 22.

[22]See the following books by C. Geertz: *The Religion of Java* (New York: Free Press, 1960); *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Stanford: Yale University Press, 1968); *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). In his *Works and Lives*, Geertz reflects on the art of writing. Here he tries to develop a style of writing that is reflective of the power of ideas, which are, in turn, derived from all the fields of the human intellectual endeavor: philosophy, sociology, anthropology, history, political science, literature, and even mathematics. Geertz draws a distinction between authors and writers. The former are founders of systems of knowledge, whereas the latter are producers of books. This distinction is particularly important in the case of Muslim writers since many of them are producers of books and not authors of systems of knowledge.

[23]See the following works by Ernest Gellner: *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and his edited work titled, *Islamic Dilemmas: Reformers, Nationalists and Industrialization: The Southern Shore of the Mediterranean* (Berlin, 1985).

[24]See the following works by the British sociologist Bryan Wilson: *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1976); *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Study of Religious Movements* (New York: Harper, 1973); and "The Return of the Sacred," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 18(3), September 1979, pp. 268-80.

[25]See the following works by Peter Berger: *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Doubleday, 1969); *A Rumor of Angels* (New York: Doubleday, 1973); *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (New York: Random House, 1973).

[26]See the following works by E. Durkheim: *Les Règles de la méthode sociologique* (Paris, 1895) (*The Rules of Sociological Method* Glencoe, 1950); *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris, 1912) (*The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, London, 1915); *Sociologie et Philosophie* (Paris, 1924).

[27]See the following works by Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958), and *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964).

terms: "religion is: (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in man by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods of motivations seem uniquely realistic."[28] To Smith religion cannot be ignored because, "[it] has been revolutionary and conservative, prophetic and priestly, catalyst and incubus. It creates barriers and levels them, raises church budgets and raises the oppressed, makes peace with inequity and redeems, to some extent, the world."[29] Religion has even prospered in the context of secularization:

> "As societies grew more complex, 'differentiation' set in, with religious and secular institutions assuming different functions. Indeed religious and worldly components of the individual psyche came to be differentiated. But this process, which some might call secularization, does not necessarily mean that religion is becoming less significant. In a world of specialists, religious specialists may be as credible as any other. Indeed, the fact that religion is increasingly individualized, and in a pluralistic world a matter of individual choice, serves to make it more important to an individual as such than when it was a more or less automatic part of tribal life. Further, religion's moral influence on seemingly secular institutions such as business and politics in a nation with a religious heritage may be indirect, but cannot be discounted."[30]

Therefore, religion is both socially relevant and metaphysically based. In a sense, Smith agrees with William James, one of the main architects of modern pragmatism in American philosophy, that religion is not only transcendent and abstract but pragmatic and socially useful.[31]

Smith's main point of reference is the metaphysical and historical experiment of monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Consequently, he presents religion as a two-dimensional relationship: The first is the subjective relation between God and man and the second is the social one between man and man. In this connection, Smith says: "Religion began in the individual's direct relationship with the transhistorical and ultimate—God by whatsoever name. From this inviolate starting point and continuing center, it has proceeded to shoulder, successively, concern for

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[28]C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*; ibid., p. 90.

[29]Smith, ibid., p. 185.

[30]R. Ellwood, Jr., "Modern Religion as Folk Religion," in *Modernity and Religion*, edited by W. Nicholls (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1987), pp. 23-24.

[31]See William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (London: Longmans, 1913), especially Chapter VIII, pp. 273-301.

interpersonal relations and society's institutions and structures. To live up to its calling, it must now add to these agendas, concern for other species and life's sustaining environment."[32]

Smith argues that the epistemological foundations of the modern West have blocked out truth. He defines the Western mindset as "an epistemology that aims relentlessly at control, and thereby rules out the possibility of transcendence in principle."[33] As a result, this mindset is reductionist, mainly because it does not conceive of the world as an *a priori* creation of the transcendent power. Smith defines reductionism as an attempt to explain all phenomena by means of matter. According to Smith, the modern Western mindset presents the following assumptions: first, history can be controlled. Second, happiness can be bestowed. Third, truth is instrumental, or as Rorty has put it, truth is made and is not found. Though Smith does not expect the Western mindset "to collapse in the way an avalanche of snow periodically slides off a roof,"[34] he suggests a new way of life to be based on participation, intuitive discernment, transcendence, and fulfillment. In short, Smith searches for social engagement on the basis of transcendence. As a result, it is possible to describe Smith's method of analysis as that of philosophical theology.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that Smith's conception of human nature rests on the society/transcendence polarity. In other words, man (1) is the product of culture, and (2) is a spirit that possesses the ability to transcend. As a product of culture, man makes tools — both physical and conceptual — that connect him with reality. In other words, meaning and inner direction (telos) is at the center of man's existence. We can summarize Smith's discussion of the monotheistic view of man in the following epistemological manner:

1) God is transcendent and He is the Source.
2) God is not only reason, but vitality and the source of all existence.
3) Everything outside of God is contingent upon God — the world, animals, and man.
4) Man is finite in both body and spirit — a) dualism in unity, and b) man is made in the image of God. Therefore, we have to understand man from the vantage point of God and not reason.
5) Man is distinguished by his rational ability — by his ability to make conceptual tools, and his capacity to transcend himself.

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[32]Smith, ibid., p. 193.
[33]Ibid., p. 200.
[34]Ibid., p. 227.

6)   Man is distinguished by self-consciousness.
7   God revealed himself in history. It is historical self-disclosure
      in the form of Christ. This is where history centers. Human
      history derives meaning from these revelations.
8)   Man is a unity of will—it is altogether the will of God.
9)   Man's essence is free self-determination, but man is a sinner
      and his sin is the wrong use of his will which leads to
      destruction. Sin is a priori and universal.

Opposed to the aforementioned view of man is the modern view which
was born in the wake of the Renaissance. The Renaissance premises rested
on the unlimited innate ability of man to rationally transcend the human
predicament. The Renaissance as a collective ideological and social
phenomenon was responsible for the annihilation of preindustrial social
structures, and especially the intellectual underpinnings of these structures.
The traditional ambiance of harmony between man and nature was no longer
viable after the eruption of the Renaissance.

One implicit assumption that Smith provides throughout his discussion
is the necessity of human engagement as an alternative to the crisis of
orientation and spiritual malaise in Western societies. A key concept in
elucidating "engagement" is ontology, which is simply defined as the science
of being. The term "being" means the whole of human reality: the structure,
the meaning, and the aim of existence. In that sense, the ontological elements
can be classified in the following terms:

1) Vitality and Form. Vitality is equated with dynamics. Man's essential
substance, which according to Smith is spiritual, is dynamic. In the Christian
sense, this dynamism reaches out beyond nature and society because of man's
capacity for transcendence. This transcendence is conditioned by man's will
which, ideally speaking, should be derived from God's. Man's dynamic
interaction with reality is a complex process that leads to continuous self-
growth and self-consciousness. Man is distinguished from animals by
consciousness. In addition to dynamics and form, man is distinguished by
vitality and intentionality. Intentionality presupposes an inner aim (telos),
and telos is the source of social dynamics and growth. Intentionality is defined
as a human capacity to relate to meaningful structures, live in universals,
grasp and shape reality. In other words, man is distinguished by his ability
to create technical as well as conceptual tools that relate him to reality in
its inclusive sense.

2) Freedom and Destiny. This is the second important polarity in human
existence. Theologically speaking, freedom is as important to man as reason.
Freedom presupposes the idea of responsibility, and responsibility presupposes
destiny. Freedom is the freedom of the function or will of man. He is free

to function because he possesses a complete rational self. Freedom is experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility. These three elements of freedom constitute man's destiny. Destiny has two constitutive elements: social and transcendental.

3) Individualization and Participation. Man is distinguished by telos, the inner aim, which is the basis of his process of actualization. Christianity has granted man, every man, the possibility of participation in the will of God. Therefore, participation is essential for the individual, and not accidental. This participation guarantees the relational aspect of human life: man is related to God and to other beings.[35]

Beyond the Postmodern Mind?

What is the condition of postmodernity? Smith comments on this by saying that: "Whereas in the past people argued and battled over which view of reality was true, the Postmodern position is that none are true."[36] In short, postmodernity argues that there are multiple realities that are not necessarily related. Postmodernism emerged both as "an academic movement" and as a political movement. Smith discusses theoretical holism as well as practical holism: "Theoretical holism argues for the organic character of thought: concepts cannot be understood in isolation; their meaning derives from the theoretical systems in which they are embedded. Practical holism goes on from there to argue that, because thinking invariably proceeds in social contexts and against a backdrop of social practices, meaning derives from—roots down into and draws its life from—those backgrounds and contexts."[37]

It is clear that modern and postmodern writers and thinkers[38] have

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[35]For a more comprehensive statement on the meaning of social existence and the sources of vitality in man's life, consult the second volume of Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology* mentioned earlier.

[36]Ibid., p. 233.

[37]Ibid., pp. 233-34.

[38]The following is a select bibliography on the meaning and history of modernism in both the West and Islam:

1) **Modernity and Western Thought**: P. Ackroyd, *Notes For a New Culture: An Essay on Modernism* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976); B. Andrew (ed.), *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin* (New York: Routledge, 1989); C. Baudouin, *The Myth of Modernity* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1950); D. Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); P. Berger, *Facing up to Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); M. Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982); R. Bernstein, *Habermas on Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985); J. Collins, *Uncommon Cultures: Popular Culture and Post-modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1989); H. Foster, (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend Washington: Bay Press, 1983); D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of*

confronted and tried to deal with the overwhelming sense of fragmentation and chaotic change that accompanied the Industrial Revolution. This is the reaction of such people as Luther, Marx, Nietzsche, Hegel, Goethe, Eliot, and Dostoevski. All these writers left behind them grand theories about life and society. Hegel, for instance, was a grand theoretician who saw life in a total, comprehensive way. His embracing vision came in response to fragmentation. In a sense, Hegel wanted to find meaning in totality. But many modern writers have noticed or recognized that the only secure thing about modernity is its insecurity; it is in a state of flux all the time. This state of flux is what defines the main nature of postmodernity. There are even more rapid changes now than before. In this sense, we could say that postmodernity is the continuation of modernity.

The project of modernity is centered around the machine; whereas the project of postmodernity is centered around the computer. The project of modernity created formalism in art and rationalism in philosophy. It tried to create a new language, so to speak. Because of its ability to mass produce, the age of modernity obliterated the distinction between high culture and low culture.

Modernity in the Works of Simmel, Kracaver, and Benjamin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985); S. Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed?* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1984); C. Grana, *Modernity and Its Discontents: French Society and the French Man of Letters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); R. Gray, *The Imperative of Modernity: An Intellectual Biography of Ortega y Gasset* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); A. Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Post-Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); F. Jameson, "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, Number 146, July-August 1984, pp. 53-94; A. Kaplan, *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture* (New York: Methuen, 1987); D. Kolb, *The Critique of Pure Modernity: Hegel, Heidgger and After* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986); Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); S. A. McKnight, *Sacralizing the Secular: The Renaissance Origins of Modernity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1989); A. Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); W. Nicholls (ed.), *Modernity and Religion* (Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1987); T. Reiss, *The Discourse of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); A Ross (ed.), *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Post-modernism* (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1988); and G. Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

II) Modernity and Modern Islamic Thought: C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933); Adonis ('Ali Ahmad Sa'id), *al-Thabit wa'l Mutahawwil*, 3 volumes (Beirut: Dar al-'Awdah, 1974-1979); J. Ahmad, *The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); M. Arkoun, *la Pensée arabe* (Paris: Vrin, 1975); M. Arkoun, *Essai sur la pensée islamique* (Paris: Vrin, 1973); Binder, L., *Islamic Liberalism: Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). See the following critical review of this book by the author: Ibrahim

Modernity had to confront the psychological, technical, sociological, and political problems of massive urbanization. It was the art of cities. In modernity, both poor and rich moved into the cities. In postmodernity, the rich were the first to escape from the cities. The urban poor, homelessness, and social poverty are the salient features of the age of postmodernity.

As mentioned above, the idea of progress was one of the most distinguishing features of the project of modernity. Nihilism, on the other hand, ushered us into the age of postmodernity. As a philosophical movement, nihilism is simply translated as the loss of a spiritual center.

How did modernity deal with disaster? We know that the idea of progress in the West was responsible for the immense devastation that resulted from two world wars. I think that modernity, in an attempt to defend itself, resorted

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M. Abu-Rabí', "Is Liberalism in the Muslim Middle East Viable? A Critical Essay on Leonard Binder's Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies," *Hamdard Islamicus* Vol. XII (4), Winter 1989, pp. 15-30; C. Bouamarne, *la Problème de la liberté humaine dans la pensée musulmane* (Paris: Vrin, 1978); H. Djait, *La personalité et le devenir arabo-islamique* (Paris: Vrin, 1974); H. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947); Y. Haddad, *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982); H. Hanafi, *The Origin of Modern Conservatism and Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt* (Amsterdam, 1979); H. Hanafi, "Des Idéologies Modernistes à l'Islam Revolutionnaire," *Peuples Mediterranéens* 21, October-December, 1982; A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); T. Husayn, *The Future of Culture in Egypt* (Cairo, 1936); M. Imarah, *Tayyārāt al-fikr al-islāmī al-ḥadīth* (Trends of Modern Islamic Thought) (Cairo, 1987); M. Jabiri, *al-Khiṭāb al-'arabī al-muʿāṣir* (Contemporary Arabic Discourse) (Beirut, 1982); M. Jabiri, *Ishkālīyāt al-fikr al-'arabī al-muʿāṣir* (The Problematics of Contemporary Arabic Thought) (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Wiḥdah al-'Arabīyah, 1989); F. Jada'an, *Uṣūl al-taqaddum 'inda mufakkirī al-islām fī'l 'ālam al-'arabī al-ḥadīth* (Principles of Progress As Viewed by Muslim Thinkers in the Modern Arab World) (Beirut, 1970); M. Lahbabi, *Le personalisme musulman* (Paris: Vrin, 1962); M. Lahbabi, *Le monde de demain: Le Tiers-monde accuse* (Casablanca: Sherbrooke, 1980); H. Laoust, "Le Reformisme orthodoxe des "Salafiyya," et les caractères generaux de son organisation actuelle," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* VI: 175-224 (1932); A. Laroui, *Islam et modernité* (Paris: Editions La Decouverte, 1987); S. Mahmassani, "Muslims: Decadence and Renaissance-Adaptation of Islamic Jurisprudence to Modern Social Needs," *The Muslim World* XLIV: 186-201 (1954); Z. Mahmud, *Tajdīd al-fikr al-'arabī*, (Renewal of Arabic Thought) (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1971); R. Martin (ed.), *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985); R. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University) Press, 1969).

F. Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); F. Rahman, "Roots of Islamic Neo-Fundamentalism," in *Change and the Muslim World*, edited by P. Stoddard (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981); E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978); H. Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875-1914* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970); J. Waardenburg, *L'Islam dans le miroir de l'Occident* (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1963); and A. Zein, "Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6, 1977: 224-54.

to mythology: the fight against fascism in both Germany and Italy was depicted as a fight to defend Western democracy and civilization. There is no doubt that both fascism and democracy were the product of modernity. The same occurred in Vietnam: The myth was to defend democracy. How can one do that when the devastating effects of modern advanced technology were unleashed against a peasant culture? This is still the major preoccupation of postmodern American movies.

In order to better illustrate the main features of modernism, postmodernism, and beyond postmodernism, I have constructed the following schematic table:[39]

Modernism	*Postmodernism*
art object/finished work	process, performance
centralization	decentralization
class sruggle	gender and ethnic struggle
construction	deconstruction
culture	subculture(s)
family-orientation	social separatedness
form	antiform
hermeneutics	nihilism
hierarchy	anarchy
high culture	low culture
histoire	post-histoire
industrial	post-industrial
interpretation/reading	against inter./misreading
paranoia	schizophrenia
patriarchy	women's liberation
power	multiplicity of power
presence	absence
progress	devastation
purpose	play
revolt	uprising(s)
narrative/grande histoire	anti-narrative/petit histoire
state power	corporate power
theory	paradigm
religion	sects

Third world

Modernism	*Postmodernism*
colonization	nation-state
modernization	open-door policy
Westernization	Americanization
stagnation of tradition	tradition vs. modernity
traditional culture	liberalism

It is to be noted that one of the most significant features of "beyond postmodernism" is the resurgence of religion in both industrial and peasant societies. This phenomenon has clearly dominated the Islamic discourse, at least in the past two decades. Consequently, we can assume that Smith's call for transcending the post-modern mind is actually a call for return to the origins, or return to the pre-modern and traditional structure of thought and behavior.

Conclusions

Huston Smith treats the religious quest as a universal spiritual phenomenon that has both objective historical form and a personal/mystical subjective form. Though his analysis does not dwell on Islam as a major religious phenomenon,[40] he understands its sources of vitality—both spiritual and historical. Moreover, Muslim intellectuals can learn from his treatment of the meaning, nature, orientation, and the role of religion in complex societies.

Smith's approach is asociological, though he is not against a sociological interpretation of religion. One needs to elaborate such major themes as society, human existence, and human intentions as a means of understanding the connection between the sacred and the secular.

Just like the German thinker Paul Tillich, Smith is on the boundary between philosophy and theology.[41] He uses philosophical concepts as a means

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[40]He does, however, have a chapter on Islam in his book *The Religions of Man*, to be reissued in 1991 as *The Great Religions*.

[41]See P. Tillich, *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (New York: Scribner, 1966). Tillich maintains that "anyone standing on the boundary between theology and philosophy must necessarily develop a clear conception of the logical relationship between them. . . . I answered by classifying all of the methodological disciplines as sciences of thinking, being, and culture; by maintaining that the foundation of the whole system of sciences is the philosophy of meaning; by defining metaphysics as the attempt to express the Unconditioned in terms of rational symbols, and by defining theology as theonomous metaphysics. In this way I attempted to win a place for theology within the totality of human knowledge." (Ibid, p. 55). In his